1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
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of them." This demonstrates clearly the strong bond between these relatives. Sometimes a waku's gawel is not galle to the waku's father except distantly. Obviously, given the above feelings, the gawel-waku relationship adds much to the strength of a clan and at the same time helps prevent trouble between the two groups. 604

If a fight developed, gawel would help waku with the loan of his spears, and, if necessary, by fighting for him. His own sons would also aid his waku, their dué. A waku is taught much of what he knows about fighting and hunting by gawel. If the older man is a magician he also teaches this art to his waku. [868]

Gawel uses waku's property, or vice versa, with the freedom of a brother or father. If gawel's wife is misbehaving, waku tries by indirect threats of death to make her conform to the tribal ideal of conduct. [624]

Sometimes a gawel promises a waku his daughter, the boy makes presents to him for a long period of time, and the gawel then refuses to give him the girl. This means trouble. Strong pressure would usually be put upon the older man to force him to give her to the boy. This might end in an interclan fight, or the waku would probably run away with her. 604 578

Another disappointing situation for waku that occasionally occurs is when a gawel says, "I'll give you the daughters from this wife." The waku makes presents over a period of time, meanwhile watching the woman to see if she is going to bear children. If she is barren or produces only sons he stops making his father-in-law presents and turns his attention to some other gawel. 604 584 431

The Australian aborigine is a most industrious trader. Articles of trade are passed over well-known trade routes for hundreds of miles and through many tribes. The Murngin and their neighbors are no exceptions to this rule. The Ritarngo and the Djinba trade stone spear heads to the seacoast tribes for red ocher and pipe clay, or for wooden spears. Ranga string is exchanged between them, as well as many other articles. The waku-gawel reciprocal is utilized for the trading. All men try to have as many distant waku as they can. Presents are constantly being exchanged between the two, not to acquire material wealth so much as to extend a man's sphere of influence beyond the nearby clans. It pleases a Murngin to have a present sent from a distant people and adds greatly to his social prestige. It also gives him a greater feeling of safety when traveling, to know that he has a waku or gawel with whom he has this trading relationship. Waku and gawel often visit each other and their behavior demonstrates real friendship when they meet. 439 438 604 431 554 574

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blood, the heart's blood of a man or woman killed by magic, a hair belt from the head of a dead man, a gondjurma or killing stick used to puncture the heart of a sorcerer's victim, the body of a dead man, a burial platform where a body formerly lay but which has since been removed, the warro or soul which goes to the totemic well, and the mokoi or trickster soul. All of these items have a common element, namely, they are associated with the dead. Each one is directly and primarily related to some aspect of death. The dead, too, are looked upon as "inside," particularly because very shortly after death the sacred totemic emblem is placed upon the body of the dead. Women can no longer look at the corpse, which is immediately wrapped with paper bark and completely covered, exactly like a totemic object. The paper bark is now "outside" and something that the women can look at, while the dead, with the sacred emblem upon it, is now "inside" and dal. The dead belong to the world of the sacred (see mourning rites), and these objects, by their primary association with the dead, partake of this power.

*Dal Magicians' Paraphernalia, and Relics.*—A third category of dal objects—the paraphernalia of the magician and relics used by the ordinary man to give him extra-mundane aid in his hunting or fishing—are actually only a subdivision of the preceding category, since the power of magicians and the power of relics find their source in the sacredness of the dead.

The heart's blood of a man whose soul has been stolen by a magician is saved, and it often turns up in the hands of a magician or an ordinary layman in the form of a kind of resin, which is supposed to be the hardened blood. This can be used in fighting to give a little extra power, and in hunting or fishing it is used the same way as the shavings of a killing stick, to be described presently. Sometimes the heart's blood is placed inside the white magician's spirit bag to give it extra power. This blood gains extra mana by passing through the possession of a number of people and usually is traded in from more remote regions in the south.

When the body of a man killed by magic or in a spear fight is disinterred and the flesh removed from the bones, the finger bones are often distributed as relics among the clansmen and near relatives. These relics are wrapped in string and placed carefully in the possessor's dilly bag as reminders of the crime they feel has been commited. This is also true of pieces of the spear which remain in the body, and of pieces of bark or wood which the dying man may soak in his blood

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and present to his relatives as reminders. The power which these relics possess is due to the soul of the dead following the bones. The soul is a true or totem-well warro. It listens from the totem well and comes when it is needed for an avenging expedition or to help its possessor in time of trouble. Any account of a clan feud is always filled with the use of these relics. Usually, when a maringo expedition is starting, a magical ceremony is gone through by the avenging group in which the bone of the dead plays the central rôle and decidedly helps to a successful conclusion. The gondjurma or killing stick used by the black magician to puncture the heart of his victim has great power, first, because it is associated with the dead body, second, because it is believed that the souls of the victims cluster about the point, and third, because it gains power by passing through the hands of a great number of men as it is traded from clan to clan and from tribe to tribe. The soul which adheres to this magic is also the Wongar one. It is like a friend to its possessor and he is its master. All of these souls are in or on the stick and can be called for help in hunting or fishing. They will also come to a man when he dreams. They will help foretell the future for him. If he is to be ill, he will feel something pricking him like the end of the stick. If good things are going to happen, one of the souls will come and tell him. If a stick is supposed to have killed a large number of men, all of the souls are supposed to be with it, but actually they are looked upon as one, and it is not so much an individual soul as a kind of diffused power or mana. A killing stick can be in the possession of a magician, or he can give it to an ordinary man who is one of his friends. Such a stick is always kept wrapped in paper bark and covered just as though it were a totemic emblem or ceremonial object and must not be subjected to the profane sight of women or the uninitiated.

When a man wishes to obtain its power to help him in hunting he scrapes off pieces, chews them and swallows them the night before the hunt. Immediately afterwards he shuts his eyes, says nothing, and goes to bed. Next morning he utters not a sound and goes out with his spears looking for game or for fish. "Those souls which the stick killed before this have gone into the water or out into the bush and they have stopped the fish and game so that they can be found. When the man arrives he sees a few. He spits in the water (he is fishing) and a lot of fish come there. He spears one fish and when he spears the one all the rest go dead as if you had poison in the water."

If he were hunting kangaroo it would be impossible for him to miss,

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Before they arrive, the women have left their separate camps and gathered around a tree. They sing out in answer to the men as the men come on. The leader calls out the big name of a catfish, "ka-pi-la." When the sacred name of the catfish is said, the women run away. This name is also supposed to represent the well of a clan which is supposed to be far in the interior, possibly near the upper waters of the Roper River (Ba-rel-ku country). The women return and gather around the tree. The leader climbs the tree and calls out the power names of the well where the women first came on shore and the names of all the old Wongar men who lived in that well. He beats his singing sticks very rapidly and then comes down. He sings out caterpillar (the edible variety). The women dance with their elbows flexed and shake their bodies in a syncopated rhythm. The leader calls out the name of another well and once more the name of the catfish, while the men put their baskets in their mouths and bite them. Two men with their hands clasped behind them then walk with long deliberate steps, much in the manner of the military goose step of the parade grounds. They dance a short distance to the right, then turn on their heels and retrace their steps. While they move back and forth they and the chorus sing out, "R-R-R-T-wa!!! R-R-R-T-wa!" which is supposed to be the call of the white duck, the bird they are dancing. They are succeeded by pairs of dancers until all have gone through this performance, which finishes the ceremony for the night.

Early every morning and again in the evening this performance (Section E), from beginning to end, is repeated for possibly two or three months. The morning ceremony is performed before breakfast and the evening ceremony is held at twilight, before the evening meal. The only variations occur in the order of the sacred names of wells called out. The entire cycle of Dua totem wells is called out at one time. At times some of the well names are repeated. Only the power names of the Dua wells are said during the Dua Narra, but it is felt that it is imperative to call every one of them. It is highly possible that many of the wells which are supposed to be found in the extreme interior are not real.

On the final day the last well dance is performed in the *middle* of the day. That night the men go to the Narra ground and light bushes and paper bark and carry them to the main camp. The men sing "ben-bur." After the fire the ranga string can be given to the Yiritja in trade. Some of the men say, "Are we going to put these [strings] in the mud again?"

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The leader replies, "We can't do that now. We must keep the string and sell it to another man so that he can make presents to us."

The people say, "All right, we'll do that. We'll only sell this string this time to the Yiritja people. We'll sell them to our wakus and our dués and our galles. We'll put this wood in the mud; we'll keep this string for presents."

*Native Interpretation.*—The fire that is carried to the main camp by the men is supposed to represent the fire which the women thought destroyed their totemic baskets but which the Wongar men had lit to fool the women when they stole their baskets from them.

"When the women dance around that tree and sing out when the men call, that means those two Wongar women put their yam sticks [rangas] in that tree. It's all the same ranga in the well."

"Those two Djunkgao mielks made those wells. They walk along, squat down, stick yam sticks in the ground and put rangas there. We people come from those wells today. We get our names from those wells. Those two mielk Wongars gave those names to our old marikmos. All our big names come from those wells from our marikmos. All the old marikmos were Wongar men and all the Narra wells are Wongar wells. All Dua wells were made with yam sticks and those two old mielks were walking."

The relation of the giving away of the ranga string to fire is given the following interpretation: "You must have fire before you can give away that ranga string to the Yiritja because those Wongar people did steal their rangas from the women. Those old men thought, 'We stole those rangas from those women. Are we going to sell them or are we going to put them in the mud, string and all?' Their leader said to them, 'We can't. We must keep them and sell them to another man so he can give presents to us.' After this the people said, 'All right, we'll do that. This will cut out the guratu [relationship] lines, and we'll sell this ranga to the Yiritja. We'll put the wood in the mud and give them the string.' We shave for this too."

"We never give that ranga wood away. It is sent back to the well. If a man gave it away his people would kill the man he gave it to." (This is the ideal, but in reality the totemic wood is given away, although there is a feeling against it.)

The information quoted above came to me when one of the better leaders of the Narra ceremonies was describing how the ceremonies were carried out. It is almost impossible for a Murngin to describe

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175 Many of the black men went back to the Malay country with the returning fleets and stayed through the intervening season. There are a few cases of men who stayed permanently and married Malay women, but this was very rare.

The Malays also bought spears and spear-throwers from the blacks, but it is likely that this was done in modern times because of their interest in them as mementos rather than weapons.

175 177 439 438 The trade with the Malays seems to have been purely on a basis of exchange, with very little else in its social content. Nevertheless, it had little effect on the aboriginal ideas of trade. The Murngin trade is fairly extensive. The native sometimes exchanges things he possesses for the things he needs and cannot get from his own territory; but the larger basis of trade in northeastern Arnhem Land is one of social reciprocity which establishes a social bond between the traders and enlarges the social periphery of each. A trade between two people is considerably ritualized, and may be an exchange of the same objects, such as carved spears, spear-throwers, or baskets.

All this again shows the strong resistance of the Murngin culture to outside influence. The Malay trader came for an exchange of goods and nothing else; and it would be thought that, in the hundreds of years he is likely to have been in Arnhem Land, he would have given a new impetus to Murngin ideas of exchange. But as far as can be determined, the Murngin ideas are no different from what they were before he arrived, since the trade life fits into the general setting of their culture. Further, this system of exchange is no different from that of the interior tribes, and it is still not a matter of pure economics, but is of more significance to the social and ritualistic life of the people.

175 177 *Malay Influence on the Aboriginal Material Culture.*—Although the influence of the Malay was of no great importance, nevertheless it had considerable influence upon certain aspects of the material culture of the tribes who occupied the coastal plains along the Arafura Sea and the western shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria.

In brief, the Malay introduced the dugout canoe, its mast and pandanus sail, the Malay type of pipe, a fashion for cutting the beard in a kind of Van Dyke style, and an appreciation for iron and other metals. It is possible the tides had carried in wooden planks with metal on them before the Malay arrived in Australia, for at the present time the natives often find planks with nails, which they extract and use for fish hooks. The tomahawk was also brought into North Australia and became a part of the native culture, partly supplanting, along the coast, the ground stone axe. It was, of course, not made by the Australians. The technique of grinding a stone axe is still known by the men of these tribes. The metal axes did not come in sufficient number to supply all the needs of the

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the mangel type, but only about half of the wood at the place where the incision is made is cut away. Fiber string and resin form the hafting materials.

The cylindrical type of spear-thrower is not a hunting weapon, and is supposed to be carried only by old men, although young men have been observed using it. Its chief use is ceremonial. The leader of a totemic dance frequently directs the dances with it, using it as a baton as he keeps time to the rhythm. Sometimes this spear-thrower baton has red parrot feathers tied to the end of each piece of human hair string.

*Spears*

The spears possessed by the Murngin may be divided into four main types, according to the variety of heads possessed by each. They are: (1) stone, (2) wooden, (3) sting-ray prong, and (4) in the present day, iron.[2] The writer has chosen the above classification by material because each has a separate technique for its manufacture and because a classification by function would not divide the spears into different varieties, for all of them, with the exception of the third, are used in both fighting and hunting. Spears are used only by men and boys, never by women.

A. *Stone-pointed Spears.*—The length of the flaked-stone spear head has a norm of six inches and a variation of from three and a half to seven and a half inches. Its diameter at the upper end (widest part) is two inches, with a variation of from one and one-half to three inches. Some of the spear heads are serrated along the edges, but the majority are not. (The chipping technique is not applied to stone spear heads in this area, and is found only among the tribes centering around the Kimberley region of West Australia.) The peoples of the coastal plain obtain all their spear heads by trading with the table-land peoples in the interior.

The wooden shaft, usually of eucalyptus (but also of canes and mangrove wood), is normally about six feet long, and varies from five feet nine inches to nine feet in length. The diameter of the shaft is three-quarters of an inch. Its distal end is split in the center for about four to five inches to allow the stone head to be inserted. The stone and wood are then joined by a wrapping of fiber string and a secondary coating of native beeswax. The proximal end has a small hole bored in it. This serves as an articulation socket for the peg of the spear-thrower. For a distance of three to four inches each side of the hole, the shaft is wrapped with fiber string and coated with ironwood cement to prevent splitting.

All the shafts are smeared with red ocher, and eighteen inches of the distal ends is painted with white clay. The beeswax is likewise covered with pipe clay. Painting is for decoration only, and has no utilitarian or magical purpose.

B. *Wooden-headed Spears.*—Spears with wooden heads may be classified

[2] Not discussed here, for the reason that they form an exotic element in the culture.

2: Berndt E-S (1946-1950) 1955
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[6] I would not say, however, that Thomson's material (1949) on ceremonial economic exchange fills many gaps, if any, in Warner's data (see Leach 1951:34). It is obvious, I think, both from his material and from ours, that exchanges of this nature between M.B. and Sr.S. comprise merely one element in a wide system of economic exchanges. Goods travel backwards and forwards through the network of cognatic relationships, against a background of linked and allied linguistic groups, in a traditionally prescribed fashion, between certain specified kin, passing outside the periphery of the Wulamba bloc into and from alien Aboriginal or European (or Indonesian, as before) channels. Such exchanges consist of specified objects or commodities, which move in different directions across the surface of the whole country; but this is only one aspect relevant to the total kinship system.

Also, I would agree with Leach (p. 32) that in a marriage exchange the equivalent of a woman is not only another woman, and that the equivalent of a woman may be found not only in goods and labor and symbolic objects. Certain intangibles can play a part—and these may involve prestige, rights, services, and perhaps status. Little work, as yet, has been done in consideration of these. Reciprocal exchanges between males and females, or between females, should also be discussed in much greater detail, for these are not just reflections of exchanges between male partners. It is not satisfactory to consider an EGO as being always a male, as has been done in most discussions of kinship systems. Where prestations occur between male and female kin, these seem to conform with traditional patterns; but between female kin (i.e., among the Wulamba), this is not so apparent.

[7] Radcliffe-Brown (1931:4–5) calls the local group a horde: he states that each horde is independent and autonomous, managing its own affairs and acting as a unit in its relations with other hordes (however, see pp. 28, 100). Elkin (1938:39–41, 73–74) discusses the local group: it is, he tells us, an enlarged family, consisting of a man and his living descendants in the male line; such a group can be a local patrilineal clan. Elkin then draws a distinction between the local group and the horde, which is as we have defined it above. In fact his statements would, I think, agree with our own here.

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5: Webb M-5 (ca. 1930) 1934
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either for good or ill. Thus there are found few natural leaders among these people, a man's individuality being submerged in the life of his horde or tribe. This same fact, coupled with the extreme isolation in which this race has for centuries lived, has also served to stultify progress.

Only by a man of exceptionally forceful character could reforms be instituted, and life has consequently gone on practically unchanged for countless generations.

Toward those whose friendship has been proved these aborigines show a splendid spirit of loyalty. Those who treat them in a fair and friendly fashion will receive fair dealing and devoted friendship in return.

## Arts and Crafts

The weapons and utensils used throughout this area correspond to the usual aboriginal type, but include a number of local variations. Little use is made of any weapon other than the spear, though clubs of several types are used to a limited extent, as also are boomerangs.

There are many varieties of wooden spears, barbed and unbarbed, some of which have the head and the haft fashioned out of a single piece of hardwood in a very remarkable way. Flaked stone spear-heads are much used, particularly for fighting, and these heads are traded over wide distances.

The use of iron, particularly for spear-heads and cutting implements, has been known for many decades, this material being obtained in limited quantities from the old traders from Macassar. Only boomerangs of a heavy type are used, and these are by no means common. The light, return boomerang is unknown, as is also the shield.

Many types of "dilly-bag" are made, some of which are of such fine texture as to retain water. Others are highly decorated with feathers or fur woven in during manufacture. The material used in most cases is the split leaf of the pandanus palm. Other bags are made of string knotted very neatly and evenly in an open mesh. Fish nets are also constructed in the same way.

Excellent string is manufactured from bark fibre, grass, fur, and human hair, and is used for a wide variety of purposes. Much of it designed for ceremonial purposes is decorated with feathers interwoven during spinning. Strong rope is made of bark fibre or grass, and used in the harpooning of turtle, dugong, or porpoise, and for the mooring of canoes.

7: Berndt E-5 (1946-1950) 1952
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## *The Djanggawul Myth*

and left deposits of red ochre[1] at Warnggawoi and Gulmanbi spring.

Before the Djanggawul left Nguruninana, two novices were circumcised, a *mora* and a *gurlmu*. These two boys[2] were sitting in a big shade undergoing the circumcisional rites. When cut in the camp they were called *gamajadi*, and then, on being taken out to their seclusion shade, they were called *galibingu*. This was the first time circumcision had been carried out in that region. Afterwards it became a general practice, because the Djanggawul had 'made it a big dreaming.'[3] But the Djanggawul Brother himself was never 'cut' or circumcised in this way: he only shortened his penis. He is said to have circumcised the young boys 'because he didn't want the youths' penes to grow long like his'. He made this law for the new generation only, 'a new law for new people.' And he spoke to them, saying, 'It doesn't matter for myself, but it must be a new law for all my new people, all those I have put in this country.'[4]

[1] This red ochre is called *murunggun*, from which the local linguistic group takes its name. The Djanggawul are said to have spoken here: 'We leave this red ochre, so that all the people may get it from us.' Red ochre is symbolic of the afterbirth blood shed by the Two Sisters, or is a 'condensation' of the sun's redness, as symbolized in the red chest feathers of the *lindaridj* parakeets. Today red ochre from Elcho Island is traded far inland, and all along the coast.

[2] Also termed *muralai* or *mulalai*. The old term used to describe this stage was *galibingu* or *galingurn*: the novices are called by this term, or *galamunja* (referring to their penes), while undergoing the rites, and cannot use their real names. The real names of these two were, however, Nganangu and Bralbral, both of the *dua* moiety. The latter is said not to be the same as the Bralbral who accompanied the Djanggawul from Bralgu. These two novices went back and forth from the general camp to their sacred shade. (Among the north-eastern Arnhem Landers there is not the strict seclusion of circumcision novices found in most other parts of Australia.)

[3] In another version it is said that a son of the Djanggawul, a *murlgu* flying fox, was circumcised at Blue Mud Bay; his foreskin was kept and waxed into a feathered string pendant attached to a sacred dilly bag, as is the practice to-day. The reason given for the circumcision is that the Djanggawul Brother discovered that his children (those removed from the Two Sisters) were sleeping together, and indulging in incestuous relations with one another (as the Djanggawul themselves were in the habit of doing). At first he did not realize what they were doing, but one day he found them copulating together. Then he 'changed his mind' and cut (circumcised) the penes of the young boys (his sons), 'because they had slept with their sisters: that was their punishment'.

[4] Informants remark, 'He had been going on in the old way until that time, just like those people at Goulburn Islands, and the Gunwinggu, and others of western Arnhem Land. All those people haven't adopted the new law. If the Djanggawul Brother put it at those places, the people there have missed the law—but we, the north-eastern and north-central people, did not miss his law.'

Another version states that the Djanggawul started circumcision 'because he was pushed out by new people' (in the dreaming concept of *jiritia*, spring water).

9: Thomson E-5 (1935-1943)1949
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pounding stones called *poipuro* (page 71) it is exported as *gerri* within the ceremonial exchange system.

It is part of my thesis to show that an important function served by the ceremonial exchange cycle is in supplying this incentive, this motive for fine craftsmanship, the anticipation of the ritual and pageantry, by adding romance or "glamour" to work which would otherwise be drudgery. A man does not as a rule set out to manufacture a stone axe as he may a fish spear or a hunting spear, to satisfy an immediate need. Such an implement requires hours, even days, of grinding and polishing after the preliminary rough shaping of the hard stone. But, as it has been pointed out, these axes are made by a craftsman who probably learned the craft from his father and are accumulated as *gerri* which will be presented on some future ceremonial occasion to "pay back" a present that the maker has received from one of his exchange partners, or they are used to create an obligation which his partner will later discharge.

The stone quarry at ŋillipidji where *ŋämbi lirra* are made, covers acres of ground, and hundreds, perhaps thousands, of spear heads come from the quarry in the course of a year. Like the stone axe heads, these flint heads are not made for immediate use, but are passed from Wagilläk territory—in bundles of a dozen or so, each wrapped neatly in the paperbark sheath called *djalk*—to reciprocate ceremonial presents of *muadäk*, or to build up goodwill and prestige. Big bundles are sent north and north-west, in the knowledge that they will be reciprocated ultimately with other *gerri* of a traditional kind and of at least equivalent value.

From the orientation of a man of Mildjiŋi clan of the Glyde River, the people to the north who occupy the territory along the northern shoreline, at Glyde Inlet, and Banyan

182 Island at the mouth of the Goyder River, are *kumur mua-*
431 *däk*, and it is from his partners in this region within the
438 *kumur märnda* relationship or ceremonial exchange cycle, and in former times from the Macassar people themselves, that a Mildjiŋi man looked, for all the articles of the class called *muadäk* and *mäthäkäl*.

My informant, Raiwälla, of Mildjiŋi clan (of the middle Glyde River), speaking of the *kumur märnda* relationship, the circulation of *gerri*, and his place in the exchange system, said quite spontaneously:

"I make (*gerri*) come down from *diltji* (hills) and go down along sandbeach." i.e. "I, as 'middle man' gather *gerri* from the high hills—in this case from *kumur djalk* and *kumur kärin*—and send them down to the coast."

In the phrase quoted above, my informant expressed his attitude towards the exchange cycle and his understanding of the part it plays in the circulation of wealth. He sees himself, in his territory on the Glyde River, as the "middle man" between the people of the inland (to whom he is *kumur muadäk*), and the people of the coast (to whom he is *kumur kärin*). (See map 2 of Arnhem Land with diagram of ceremonial exchange cycle, prepared from standpoint of a Mildjiŋi clansman.) From the inland he obtains *gerri* such as *ŋämbi lirra* (flint spear heads), *källi-gälli* (boomerangs), *källämba* (forehead fillets), and many other items, and passes these on to his partners on the coast, from whom he obtains reciprocal presents, especially of the *gerri* called *muadäk*, which he, in turn, must pass inland again to *kumur kärin* and *kumur djalk*. For the people of Banyan Island, the mouth of the Goyder River, and Howard Island, most *gerri* of the *kumur djalk* horizon come by another route—along the Goyder River and the hinterland of Buckingham Bay. From the social standpoint the constant

9: Thomson E-5 (1935-1943)1949
O117 Murngin O117

It is probable that under ordinary conditions, if the circulation of these axes depended on straight-out exchange or barter, their value to the seafaring peoples of the north and east coasts of Arnhem Land, for the cutting of dugout canoes, would have been such that the people would have parted with them reluctantly. But under the ceremonial exchange system, and the compelling need to build up goodwill and to increase their prestige by the circulation of *gerri*, and especially to make reciprocal gifts for those already received, the people on the sea coast, who received these axes first, must have been compelled to pass many of them rapidly southward to partners in *kumur djalk* and *kumur kärin*. Of this circulation of *gerri* an informant remarked—"I must make road there". It is significant that he used the words "must" and "road". The word "road" my informant translated first as *kumur*, then as *kumur dukarr*—conceiving the movement of *gerri* as so regular and extensive as to make a beaten path or "road", *dukarr*, a conception to which reference was made on page 69 above.

But again it must be remembered that the *social* obligations of the ceremonial exchange cycle, which to the natives are the obvious and vitally important ones, far outweigh the economic exchange which accompanies it, and sometimes persist after the actual need for its *gerri* has passed, as in the case of the iron spear heads from Blue Mud Bay which were passing down to the Roper River long after this area had become settled.

There is little doubt that a ceremonial exchange system existed in Arnhem Land before the coming of the visitors from Indonesia and it is not intended to suggest that the exchange system in this territory depends on the coming of these seafaring visitors. But its orientation at the present time, and its most important "drives" certainly owe much

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
O117 Murngin O117



cattle to Yirrkala it was not long before their likeness too appeared on bark sheets. 532

I saw little-known caves on the Wessel Islands, in which totemic myths had been painted side by side with Japanese pearlers, Macassar proas, and odd European wanderers. Rock paintings are common in many parts of Australia, except in Arnhem Land where outcrops of rock are so rare that only three lots of rock paintings have been found. Here the primitive artist uses a bark sheet, which in itself indicates some measure of aesthetic impulse, for it is not easily obtained and has no permanence.

The Serpent in sacred myths is spiritually present in the 778
'maraian' or log painted with totemic symbols. For cere- 531
monies, the maraian is kept in a bush shelter deep in the 796
scrub, and initiated men guard it till the moment arrives for its dramatic elevation. They push their way through the shelter toward the over-awed initiates, and grovel, shudder, squirm, and roll over and over with strained and contorted faces, as if overcome by dread of the long maraian so carefully borne across their bodies. Wriggling along in the rear, the leader of the ceremony blows through the maraian and produces the low booming sound so feared by women and children and believed to be the voice of the Serpent.

Designs on maraian are made from coloured clays, 386
string, and feathers. Hundreds of yards of string are wound 531
on some of them, and the effect is enhanced by weaving [778]
into it white birds'-down, red and green parrots' feathers, [237]
or opossum fur. Red ochre-stone from a totem centre on [438]
Elcho Island is traded for hundreds of miles, and is in de- [302]
mand because of a greasy property which makes it adhere to
the skin. Ordinary clay-paints crack and peel, but this [824]
is overcome by crushing orchid stems and smearing the
sticky juice over the body before applying the paint.
Participants in ceremonies decorate themselves with totemic 531
designs, and glue long lines of white birds'-down on their 301